

November 17, 1998

Federal Communications Commission  
Secretary, Magalie Salas  
FCC 1919 "M" Street N.W., Room 222  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Re: FCC WT Docket 98-143

FCC MAIL ROOM

Dear Sirs,

I am extremely distraught at any idea to lessen the requirements of the current amateur radio license examination elements. I am writing from the point of view as one who has held a FCC first class radiotelephone license, second class radio telegraph license, and a ham radio license for 27 years. I have also worked as a shipboard radio officer for the last 12 years and U.S. Coast Guard radio operator and electronic technician for ten years prior to that.

It is not hard to understand with today's modern technology that radio and it's various modes of communicating have changed significantly since my entry into this once fine endeavor. Due to theses changes, I have no problem with a simplified license procedures for an entry level amateur license. However while it is apparent that changes in the amateur rule structure in the past 10 years has bolstered the ranks of amateurs, at the same time it has not improved their technical competency or ability to adhere to simple radio procedure or follow rules and regulations. I strongly believe that there should be a minimal discipline on behalf of the radio operator, whether we are talking about CB, Commercial, Amateur radio or military circuits.

As one who has traveled around the world extensively and used high frequency radio around the globe on U.S. merchant vessels, it is apparent to me that the U.S. amateur bands are rapidly turning into the cesspool of humanity. This is not the case with other countries around the world. I believe with all my heart that this is due to the changes in the licensing structure in the past ten years and the licenses have become too easy to obtain. ANYTHING WORTH HAVING IS WORTH WORKING FOR and an easing of the morse requirements and written examination elements will turn this once honored discipline of amateur radio into a further joke than what it has become.

I will not try and explain the merits of keeping the morse code requirement as this has been done time and time again. I will tell you however that having just returned from an 83 day sea voyage to North Korea I had to send all my arrival messages to the North Korean Ocean Shipping Agency using 500 khz morse daily. While morse code may not save the world or amateur radio, I strongly believe there is a place for it in amateur radio as a discipline and that is what it takes to master the current morse requirements, "DISCIPLINE". Without the morse requirement you might as well not have a license structure at all. Ask anyone, the written exams are so easy now that a few nights of memorization is all it takes to go from a no code technician up to amateur advance while memorizing verbatim the exact answers to the questions in the current multiple choice written elements. This appears to be a sign of the times, if the final goal is too difficult to accomplish then why not lessen the requirements and make that goal easier to reach thus the further "dumbing down of America." If the written examinations and morse requirements are further simplified, then where is the pride in ownership of having reached the goal of an operators license. I believe the end result reflects upon the operators

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value he or she places on that license and ultimately reflects upon their on air courtesy towards others while observing the rules and regulations.

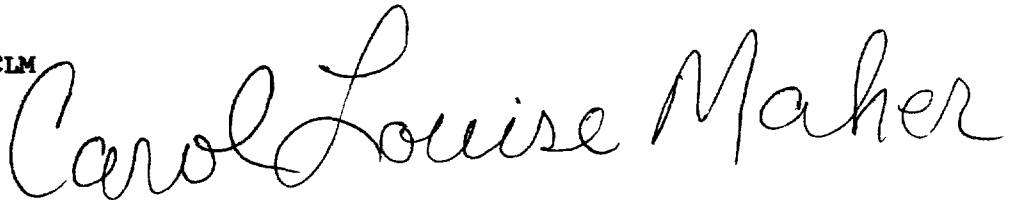
I will not take up your time trying to further explain the need for an archaic mode of communications, but I will tell you that amateur radio is so much more than just a hobby. Amateur radio is an introduction into all areas of radio and electronic engineering and a lifetime of learning. What message are we sending the young people of this country by a further simplification of the amateur examinations and morse requirements? What good is it having incentive licensing if all you have to do is memorize verbatim a hand full of questions and lessen the morse requirements. We already have enough licensees who hold advanced and extra class that do not even understand even the simplest of theories such as ohms law or who have fraudulently obtained their licenses.

In closing, I see no problem with a no code entry level license into amateur radio or a restructuring of the novice and technician class licenses. On the other hand however I feel strongly about keeping the morse requirement for the upper class licenses and a written competency exam no less than what the current standards require. In regards to the morse code requirement, I would like to propose that the 5 WPM morse requirement for a general class license only be accepted only if the advance class license is changed to that of 13 WPM which is the current general class requirement, the Extra class should remain at 20 WPM. Extra class means EXTRA privileges and along with EXTRA privileges should come EXTRA effort to obtain that permit.

Please do not allow amateur radio to become nothing more than another citizen's band.

Carol L. Maher W4CLM

Carol L. Maher  
100 O'hara Drive  
Salisbury NC 28147

A large, handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Louise Maher". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name and address.